

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

REC'D 28 JUN 2004

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| Applicant's or agent's file reference 160251 | FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/PEA/416) | |
| International application No. PCT/GB 03/01428 | International filing date (day/month/year) 01.04.2003 | Priority date (day/month/year) 02.04.2002 |
| International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC G07B17/02 | | |
| Applicant SENDO INTERNATIONAL LIMITED | | |

- This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
- This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

 These annexes consist of a total of 8 sheets.

- This report contains indications relating to the following items:
 - ☒ Basis of the opinion
 - ☐ Priority
 - ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
 - ☐ Lack of unity of invention
 - ☒ Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
 - ☐ Certain documents cited
 - ☐ Certain defects in the international application
 - ☐ Certain observations on the international application

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| Date of submission of the demand 31.10.2003 | Date of completion of this report 23.06.2004 |
| Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office - P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk - Pays Bas Tel. +31 70 340 - 2040 Tx: 31 651 epo nl Fax: +31 70 340 - 3016 | Authorized Officer Reule, D Telephone No. +31 70 340-3868  |

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB 03/01428

1. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, Pages

1, 2, 5-19 as originally filed
3, 4 received on 07.06.2004 with letter of 23.05.2004

Claims, Numbers

1-19 received on 07.06.2004 with letter of 23.05.2004

Drawings, Sheets

1/3-3/3 as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
☐ the claims, Nos.:
☐ the drawings, sheets:

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5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Novelty (N) | Yes: Claims | |
| | No: Claims | 1-3,6,11-15 |
| Inventive step (IS) | Yes: Claims | |
| | No: Claims | 4,5,7-10,16-19 |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Yes: Claims | 1-19 |
| | No: Claims | |

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB 03/01428

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

Reference is made to the following documents:

- D1: DE 101 33 887 A (SIEMENS DEMATIC AG) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30)
- D2: DE 199 40 448 A (NT INNOVATION OHG I GR) 1 March 2001 (2001-03-01)
- D3: GB-A-2 097 330 (PITNEY BOWES LTD) 3 November 1982 (1982-11-03)
- D4: US-A-6 101 487 (YEUNG YUKEE) 8 August 2000 (2000-08-08)

1. The present application does not meet the criteria of Article 33(1) PCT, because the subject-matter of claims 1-3, 6, 11-15 is not new in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT and the subject-matter of claims 4, 5, 7-10 and 16-19 does not involve an inventive step according to Article 33(3) PCT.
- 1.1 Document D1, which represents the closest prior art, discloses all features of claim 1 as it refers to (the references in parentheses apply to this document):

A method for obtaining a postage verification code , the method comprising the steps of: transmitting a request for a postage verification code from a communication device to a postal server (cf. col. 2, lines 51-54); receiving said request at said Postal server; and generating a postage verification code in response to said request; transmitting a postage verification code to said communication device (cf. col. 2, lines 60-62); receiving said postage verification code at said communication device (cf. col. 4, lines 61-64); and the method being characterised by the step of transmitting a request including transmitting information relating to a type of postage required by a user of said communication device (cf. col. 2, line 44/45); and a charge associated with said postage verification code being attributed to said communication device (cf. col. 3, line 68 to col. 4, line 4 and col. 4, lines 11-16, claim 4), said charge being dependent on said type of postage (cf. col. 2, lines 43-45).

Thus, the subject-matter of claim 1 is not new (Article 33(2) PCT).

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1.2 It should be noted that the formulation in lines 21 - 24 of claim 1 "[...] a charge associated with said postage verification code being attributed to said communication device [...]" was understood as attributing the costs for the postage verification code to the (monthly) telephone bill of the telecommunication device (cf. D1, col. 4, lines 11-14) in accordance with what is disclosed in the original description of the application (cf. description, page 8, lines 14-18). 3

1.3 Dependent claims 2, 3, and 6 are not new (Art. 33(2) PCT) because their features are also disclosed in D1:

The additional feature of claim 2 is disclosed in column 1, lines 62-67.

The additional features of claim 3 are disclosed in column 4, lines 54-67

The additional feature of claim 6 is disclosed in column 7, lines 14-19.

1.4 Dependent claims 4, 5, 7-10 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT with respect to inventive step, as their features refer to details which are well-known in the art of electronic postage meters or standard aspects of wireless communication (Art. 33(3) PCT).

2. Independent claim 11, 13, and 14 refer to a wireless communication device, to a postal server, and to a storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions adapted to perform method steps of claim 1. As D1 discloses all the features of claim 1 and a wireless communication device, a postal server, and a storage medium (cf. D1, figure 1) these independent claims are also not new (Art. 33(2) PCT).

The additional features of claim 12 are disclosed in D1, column 4, line 65 to column 5, line 10 rendering claim 13 also not new according to Article 33(2) PCT:

3. Independent claim 15 refers to a postal server comprising interface ports for receiving requests and sending the postal verification codes, with a decoder for the received request and encoder software for generating said postal verification code; characterised by that the request includes information relating to a type of postage required by a user of a communication device, and that the postal server comprises means for attributing a charge associated with said postage verification code to the communication device, whereby the charge being dependent on said type of postage.

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- 3.1 A postal server is known from D1 (cf. D1, claim 22) and the presence of a decoder and encoding software is considered to be implicitly disclosed. The features mentioned in the characterising part of claim 15 are also known from D1 (see also argumentation provided under point 1.1 of this communication): namely that the request includes information relating to a type of postage required by a user of a communication device (cf. D1; col 2, lines 40-50), and that the postal server comprises means for attributing a charge associated with said postage verification code to the communication device (cf. D1; col. 3, line 68 to col. 4, line 4 and col. 4, lines 11-16, claim 4), whereby the charge being dependent on said type of postage (cf. D1; col. 2, lines 43-45).

Thus, claim 15 lacks novelty over the disclosure of D1 (Art. 33(2) PCT).

- 3.2 Dependent claims 16-19 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT with respect to inventive step, as their features refer to details which are well-known in the art of electronic postage meters or standard aspects of wireless communication (Art. 33(3) PCT).

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However, it is envisaged by the inventor of the present invention that an individual is more likely to spend substantially smaller amounts of money on postage. Notably, such small amounts would not justify the setting
5 up of a "Stampit" account. As a consequence, the inventor of the present invention envisages that the Deutsche Post "Stampit" system will rarely be utilised by individual users or small groups.

- 10 Thus, a need exists for an improved method for obtaining and paying for postage, particularly for individuals or small groups, wherein the abovementioned disadvantages may be alleviated.

15 **Statement of Invention**

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for obtaining a postage verification code, as claimed in Claim 1.

20

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided wireless communication device, as claimed in Claim 11.

- 25 In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a Postal server, as claimed in Claim 13.

- 30 In accordance with a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions, as claimed in Claim 14.

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In accordance with a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a Postal server, as claimed in Claim 15.

- 5 Further aspects of the present invention are as defined in the dependent Claims.

In summary, a mechanism, corresponding apparatus and method for obtaining and paying for a postage
10 verification code are described. Preferably, a wireless communication device, such as a mobile phone, is used in the process. By using a wireless communication device and wireless communication network, payment information for postage verification codes do not need to be
15 communicated. The postage charges can be added to, say, a monthly bill for the user's wireless communication device.

Brief Description of the Drawings

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Exemplary embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

25

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Claims

1. A method for obtaining a postage verification code (200), the method comprising the steps of:
 - 5 transmitting a request (210) for a postage verification code from a communication device (120) to a Postal server (110);
 - receiving said request (220) at said Postal server (110); and
 - 10 generating (230) a postage verification code in response to said request;
 - transmitting (240) a postage verification code to said communication device (120);
 - receiving (250) said postage verification code at
 - 15 said communication device (120); and
 - the method being characterized by
 - the step of transmitting a request (210) including transmitting information relating to a type of postage required by a user of said communication device;
 - 20 and
 - a charge associated with said postage verification code being attributed to said communication device, said charge being dependent on said type of postage.
 - 25
2. The method for obtaining a postage verification code (200) according to Claim 1, wherein said code comprises a string of alphanumeric characters.
- 30 3. The method for obtaining a postage verification code (200) according to Claim 1, wherein said request and/or said postage verification code are transmitted wirelessly between said Postal server (110) and a

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wireless communication device (120), the method further characterised by the steps of:

- 5 providing said postage verification code to a user of said wireless communication device; and
 applying (260) said postage verification code on an item for posting.

4. The method for obtaining a postage verification
10 code according to Claim 1, wherein said information relating to a type of postage includes one or more of the following:

- (i) A price of postage required;
 (ii) A weight of said item to be posted;
15 (iii) A class of postage;
 (iv) An indication of a destination for said item to be posted.

5. The method for obtaining a postage verification
20 code according to Claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a request (210) includes transmitting a request to an address that corresponds to said type of postage.

25 6. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a request (210) includes transmitting information identifying a user of said communication device.

30 7. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 6, wherein said information

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identifying a user of said communication device includes one or more of the following:

- (i) A name of the user;
- (ii) A number associated with a wireless communication device of the user;
- (iii) An International Mobile Subscriber Identification (IMSI) number of the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) of the user; or
- (iv) An International Mobile Equipment Identification (IMEI) number of the wireless communication device.

8. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 1, wherein the postage verification code is generated based on information contained in the request, for example a destination post/zip code.

9. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 2, the method further characterised by the step of:
verifying said postage verification code applied to said item at a sorting office.

10. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 2, wherein the step of transmitting a wireless request includes:
transmitting a wireless request using a GSM unstructured supplementary service data message; or
transmitting a wireless request using a GSM short message service message; or
accessing a website hosted by the postal server.

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11. A wireless communication device (120) adapted to perform method steps of Claim 1.

12. The wireless communication device (120) according to Claim 11, wherein the wireless communication device is one of a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, a wirelessly networked PC.

10 13. A Postal server (110) adapted to perform the method steps of Claim 1.

14. A storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions for controlling one or more processors to carry out the method of Claim 1.

15. A postal server (110) comprising:
an interface port (320), through which the postal server is capable of sending and receiving postage verification code messages or requests;
a decoder for receiving a request for a postage verification code from a communication device (120); and
an encoding software application (350) to generate and send a postage verification code to said communication device (120) in response to said request, and characterized by

the request including information relating to a type of postage required by a user of said communication device; and

30 the postal server (110) comprising means for attributing a charge associated with said postage verification code to said communication device, said charge being dependent on said type of postage

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16. The postal server (110) according to Claim 15,
wherein the encoding software application (350) generates
a postage verification code comprising a string of
5 alphanumeric characters.

17. The postal server (110) according to Claim 15,
wherein the encoding software application (350) generates
a postage verification code based on the type of postage
10 requested, for example, based on information relating to
one or more of the following:

- (i) A price of postage required;
- (ii) A weight of said item to be posted;
- (iii) A class of postage;
- 15 (iv) An indication of a destination for said item
to be posted;
- (v) A destination postcode.

18. The postal server (110) according to Claim 15,
20 wherein the encoding software application (350) generates
a postage verification code based on information
identifying a user of a wireless communication device
(120) or a wireless communication device making said
request, for example, based on information relating to
25 one or more of the following:

- (i) A name of the user;
- (ii) A mobile telephone number of the user;
- (iii) An International Mobile Subscriber
Identification (IMSI) number of the Subscriber Identity
30 Module (SIM) of the user; or
- (iv) An International Mobile Equipment
Identification (IMEI) number of the wireless
communication device.

19. The postal server (110) according to Claim 15, the postal server (110) further comprising a database, operably coupled to said encoding software application
- 5 (350) for maintaining a record of the generated postage verification code, such that the record can be used to validate postage of an item bearing the postage verification code.